AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing **[[**method**]]** method, comprising:

a first step of detecting a data region **[[**in**]]** from input image data,

a second step of rotating said input image data including the data region in accordance with inclination of an image within said input image data,

a third step of detecting whether said rotated data region protrudes from said input image data previous to rotation, and

a fourth step of extracting the smallest area including said rotated data region when protrusion is detected at said third step.

2. (Currently Amended) The image processing method according to claim 1, wherein

said first step includes a step of detecting a specific region which satisfies a predetermined condition from said data region,

said third step includes a step of detecting whether said specific region protrudes from said input image data previous to rotation,

when protrusion is detected at said third step, the smallest area including said specific region is extracted from said image data at said fourth step.

3. (Currently Amended) The image processing method according to claim 2, wherein said **[[specific]]** data region includes a plurality of **[[data]]** specific regions.

4. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 2, wherein said predetermined condition indicates predetermined type of said data region.

5. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 4, wherein said predetermined type of data region includes at least one of a text region, a diagram region, a picture region, and a rule mark region.

6. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 4, wherein said predetermined type of data region do not includes being a rule mark region.

7. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 4, wherein an operator specifies said predetermined types of data region.

8. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 2, wherein said predetermined condition indicates a relative position of said data region with respect to other data regions.

9. (Currently Amended) The image processing method according to claim 2, wherein said relative position is defined by **[[centroids]]** a centroid of said data **[[regions]]** region.

10. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 2, wherein said predetermined condition indicates a relative position and a type of data region.

11. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 1, further comprising a fifth step of extracting the whole of said rotated input image data when protrusion is not detected at said third step.

12. (Currently Amended) The image processing method according to claim 1, wherein, in said third step, detection is made whether ~~every pixels~~ each pixel in said rotated data region protrudes from said input image data.

13. (Original) The image processing method according to claim 1, wherein, in said third step, detection is made whether a portion of pixels in said rotated data region protrudes from said input image data.

14. (Withdrawn) An image processing method comprising:

a first step of detecting a plurality of data regions in input image data,

a second step of rotating said input image data in accordance with inclination of an image within said input image data,

a third step of detecting whether said rotated data region protrudes from said input image data, and

a fourth step of extracting an area of a size identical to the size of said input image data and having the best relative position with respect to said data regions, when protrusion is detected at said third step.

15. (Withdrawn) An image processing method comprising:

a first step of detecting a plurality of data regions in input image data,

a second step of rotating said input image data in accordance with inclination of an image within said input image data,

a third step of detecting whether said rotated data region protrudes from said input image data, and

a fourth step of extracting an area of a size identical to the size of said input image data and where said data region of a predetermined type is not lost, when protrusion is detected at said third step.

16. (Withdrawn) The image processing method according to claim 15, wherein said predetermined type includes at least a text region.

17. (New) The image processing method according to claim 1, wherein image data is input as image information of the smallest rectangular area including text information and diagram information.